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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SKOPJE 000491

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [GR](#) [MK](#)  
SUBJECT: MACEDONIA/GREECE: WHAT THE MACEDONIANS NEED TO  
RESOLVE THE NAME DISPUTE

REF: ATHENS 1030

Classified By: DCM THOMAS J. NAVRATIL FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

Elements of a Deal

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11. (C) Embassy Skopje assesses that in the context of an agreement that clears the way for NATO membership and the start of EU accession talks, the Macedonian government would ultimately accept the following terms:

-- Name: Republic of Northern Macedonia (or: Republic of North Macedonia)

-- Scope: in all international organizations, plus bilaterally by any country that does not want to use the constitutional name. (Although we have not discussed this explicitly, presumably international agreements would follow the same pattern, with multilateral ones using the new name and bilateral ones having the option.) Macedonia would use its constitutional name in referring to itself, on passports, product labels, in the media, etc.

-- Identity: The language and nationality would be called Macedonian, but this could be handled tacitly, perhaps as a subsequent annex to a UNSCR, or in some other internal UN document not subject to Greek review/approval. Bottom line is Macedonia needs assurance that their language, nationality, etc. would continue to be called Macedonian, not North Macedonian.

12. (C) Today PM Gruevski would take exception to several aspects of this package. He wants the modifier to be in parentheses; he wants recognition of Macedonian language and nationality to be explicit rather than tacit. On scope, he would want to limit usage to IOs in which FYROM is already used. For bilateral use, he would want the UN merely to authorize, rather than encourage or recommend, use of the new name. Similarly, he would seek to limit use of the new name on international agreements. Nevertheless, we anticipate that he would in the end decide to give ground on these issues if it got him the deal. In any case, he has made holding a national referendum part of his governing platform and he will insist on fulfilling that prominent public pledge. An agreement in September would allow time for this referendum and passage of a UNSCR prior to the December NAC.

13. (C) Conversations with Prime Minister Gruevski and President Crvenkovski, summarized below, underlie Embassy Skopje's assessment. This cable, together with Athens 1030, illuminates the substantial gaps between the Macedonian and Greek positions at this time.

Amb. Milovanovic ) PM Gruevski July 25

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14. (C) After discussing concerns about Macedonian developments that may affect NATO perceptions of Macedonia's readiness (election problems, Parliament problems, spectacular arrests, budget rebalance away from MoD), the Ambassador urged that Macedonia take action to ensure that it not only does not slip below NATO criteria, but that it keep up as NATO continues to move ahead. Gruevski asked in turn if we can solve the name issue. The Ambassador replied that we are prepared to help Macedonia on this, and that we are urging that the negotiations focus solely on the key areas of the name and the usage, without inclusion of other bilateral issues.

15. (C) Gruevski expressed his view that Greece is determined not to solve this issue, and therefore he decided to open other issues (i.e., ethnic Macedonians in Greece). The Ambassador urged that Macedonia exert maximum efforts to find a solution. Gruevski welcomed the next round of talks with Amb. Nimetz in mid-August, and is prepared to accept Nimetz's invitation for a meeting among Gruevski, Karamanlis, and Sec. Rice if the August talks go well and produce progress toward a solution.

A/S Hill ) PM Gruevski July 26  
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16. (C) A/S Hill asked about lines of communication with Greece, and Gruevski mentioned only the UN process. Gruevski shared his assessment that the Greek side does not have the

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intention to solve the problem. He noted upcoming elections in Greece (early Parliamentary elections sometime between October and April (note: Emb. Athens sees early elections as very unlikely), local elections in April, and European parliamentary elections in June) and cited Greek press reports as indicating lack of intention to solve. Gruevski argued that Karamanlis, position has hardened since last October. No longer seeking just to find a new name to replace FYROM, Karamanlis now seeks to broaden the scope to all usages, and limit the Macedonian identity, history, use of toponyms. Gruevski said he is willing to solve this, based on real, reasonable redlines. Hill said he needs to make sure the Macedonian people don't become frustrated and have a nationalist reaction. Gruevski said this is already happening in Greece.

17. (C) Gruevski cited a recent poll that VMRO commissioned which he said showed that only 13 percent of Macedonians would accept the name Republic of North Macedonia. Nevertheless, if there were a proposal to use a name like that, with the new modifier in parentheses, to be used wherever FYROM is now, and recognition that the nationality and language would be called Macedonian, Gruevski expressed confidence that the public would support it in a referendum. He said that he would support it, he would expect President Crvenkovski, the international community, and the media to support it, and that with a two-month campaign the public would approve.

Amb. Milovanovic, A/S Hill ) Pres. Crvenkovski July 27  
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18. (C) Crvenkovski said that the current situation with name issue is blocked and he is concerned that this could go from a temporary situation to become permanent. Everyone including the international community is getting used to the situation, which contributes to the threat of it being long lasting/permanent. He is pessimistic for two reasons: Karamanlis and Gruevski.

19. (C) Crvenkovski thinks Greece could agree to Northern Macedonia. Hill asked about Macedonian identity and language. Crvenkovski said a possible way out is the Greek

position that discussion is on the name of the country, and nationality and language are not part of the talks. Crvenkovski sees as a possible solution that only the name and its scope of use are in the bilateral talks with Greece and in the bilateral agreement Greece would sign. Macedonia needs to keep Macedonian as its language and nationality/identity but this could be in the UNSCR only (as an appendix), not in something Greece has to sign or sign onto, thus saving face for Greece and making agreement on name and scope possible. Crvenkovski says Nimetz understands this approach.

¶10. (C) Crvenkovski thinks Republic of (Northern) Macedonia with a scope of using this wherever FYROM is used would work. Says the scope strikes him as the most problematic element. Pre-Bucharest proposal that Macedonia accepted recommended that nations consider using (or recommended that they use) the agreed name in bilateral relations instead of the constitutional name, but the most recent Nimetz proposal went to requiring bilateral international use and this is too much. Also too much is any formula that requires Macedonia to call itself something other than Republic of Macedonia, for example on passports or products. It is one thing to discuss how others call Macedonia, and under what circumstances, but quite another beyond the scope of the discussions or of the possible/reasonable to talk in terms of dictating that Macedonia call itself something other than its constitutional name.

¶11. (C) Crvenkovski said that Greece,s tactic is to provoke, change goal posts, and prolong negotiations. But this is no reason for Macedonia (PM Gruevski) to adopt the same tactics (e.g. adding the Aegean Macedonian issue to the pot). Macedonia needs a quick resolution and Greece does not so why would they have the same tactics of obstructionism and delay? But PM Gruevski is adopting exactly that delaying tactic.

¶12. (C) Crvenkovski is concerned that with Albania and Croatia en route to NATO/EU and Serbia also, with an OK government and Karadzic arrested, this means Macedonia is in serious danger of winding up among the last of the Balkans to get into NATO and EU (with Bosnia and Kosovo), which is very bad.

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¶13. (C) Crvenkovski also commented that he does not see any regional issue (now that Kosovo is independent and Serbia is moving in the right direction) that will attract the attention of Brussels and Washington to focus on Macedonia. The window of opportunity is closing fast.

¶14. (C) Crvenkovski is also concerned that even in the unlikely event Karamanlis accepts a reasonable proposal on the name (1) Gruevski will run away from responsibility for concluding the deal and (2) if unsuccessful in avoiding responsibility will go to referendum WITHOUT recommending a yes vote to the public. Result of a referendum would be helped by multi party support in Macedonia but really depends on the question. They will get &yes8 if the question is "do you want us to enter NATO and start negotiations with EU under the name of Republic of (Northern) MK?" It will fail if the question is &do you want us to surrender our constitutional name in favor of..." (3) Gruevski does not see EU and NATO as a sufficiently high priority to risk supporting a decision or a referendum yes.

¶15. (C) Crvenkovski commented that the issue of compensation for Aegean Macedonians and the issue of harassment at the Greek border and denial of entry for these people will only be solved when the name issue is solved and Macedonia is in the EU. Because then Greek shenanigans will be contrary to EU law of which Macedonia is a part. So although Gruevski trots out the Aegean Macedonians as a nationalistic reason to oppose the Greeks, in practice the way to really solve those people,s problems is to compromise with the Greeks (assuming

Karamalis will accept a decent compromise).

¶16. (C) Crvenkovski strongly suggested a big push by the U.S. in time for the Nimetz proposal/visit in mid August. He suggested that the proposal fit on one page and only address the name (Republic of Northern Macedonia) and scope (use wherever FYROM is now used) and be a &take it or leave it8 offer. This could perhaps be concluded on the margins of UNGA. UNSCR would include annex specifying language Macedonian and nationality Macedonian, and Crvenkovski is convinced Greeks will accept this if not asked directly to do so or asked to sign onto it. Just let it be part of UNSCR annex.

Milovanovic